

CLAIMS

1. Domestic electrical appliance, particularly washing machine, clothes drying machine or dishwasher, having at least one control device (10, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80), with which is associated at least one display device (15) with a light source (16, 66, 76, 86) for providing visual information to the user, the control device at least partly comprising a covering material which for a standard material thickness (14) is substantially opaque and in an area provided for the display device has at least one transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85) in which the material thickness of the covering material is so reduced compared with the standard material thickness that the transillumination area can be transilluminated by the light of the light source (16).
2. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 1, characterized in that the light source (16, 66, 76, 86) is positioned at the back of the control device (10, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80) facing the transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85).
3. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the covering material is a plastic, particularly an ABS plastic.
4. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85) of the control device (10, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80) is produced by injection moulding during the manufacture of the control device.
5. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the standard material thickness (14) exceeds approximately 1 mm and is in particular at least 2 mm.
6. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the material thickness in the transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85) is at least zonally less than approximately 0.8 mm, particularly less than approximately 0.5 mm and preferably between approximately

less than approximately 0.5 mm and preferably between approximately 0.3 mm and approximately 0.5 mm.

7. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a user-facing front surface (12) of the control device is closed and/or substantially smooth in the vicinity of the display device (15).
8. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a user-facing front surface (12) of the control device has in the vicinity of and/or in the transillumination area a preferably permanently visible marking (25) for a functionality associated with the light source.
9. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 2, characterized in that the control device back (13, 43, 53) facing or which can be made to face the light source has a macroscopic surface structuring in the transillumination area (20).
10. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 9, characterized in that the surface structuring is constructed as a structure scattering the light of the light source (16).
11. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 9 or 10, characterized in that the surface structure has a plurality of grooves (21) and raised portions (22) and the covering material is at least zonally transilluminatable, at least in the vicinity of the grooves.
12. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that additional light-varying or light-conducting devices are located in the transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85) and comprise separate parts.
13. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 12, characterized in that the devices are coloured and are in particular colour wheels.

14. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 12 or 13, characterized by at least one device from the following group: light guides, light distributors, light deflectors, concentrators, lenses and prisms and preferably in the case of light-conducting elements the light source (16) can also be further removed from the transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60, 63, 75, 85).
15. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the claims 12 to 14, characterized in that the light-varying or light-conducting device (65) is connected in fixed, non-detachable manner with the control device close to or directly at the transillumination area (63) and is in particular moulded in using a multicomponent process.
16. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the claims 12 to 14, characterized in that the light-varying or light-conducting device (77) is detachably fixed, preferably screwed or clipped, to the control device.
17. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that in the transillumination area (60) the control device (50) has at least one recess in the form of a multisegment display, particularly in the form of a seven segment display.
18. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the light source has at least one light emitting diode (16, 66, 76, 86).
19. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that with the transillumination area (20) is associated an actuating device (30, 32) for actuating a function or functional device of the domestic electrical appliance and preferably the actuating device has no movable parts.
20. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 19, characterized in that the actuating device has a sensor device (30, 32) for generating switching signals as a reaction to an approach or contact of an area surrounding the transillumination

area and preferably the sensor device is constructed as a capacitive sensor device.

21. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 19 or 20, characterized in that the actuating device has at least one sensor element (30) fitted to the control device back and which at least zonally surrounds the transillumination area (20).

22. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the control device is a panel (10), which is in particular placed in fixed manner on the domestic electrical appliance, the covering material being the panel material and for control purposes there are further actuating devices such as sensor devices (30, 32) or the like.

23. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the claims 1 to 21, characterized in that the control device (79, 80) is movable and is located on one side of the domestic electrical appliance, e.g. a panel (71, 81), the control or operation of the domestic electrical appliance being determined by the direction and/or extent of the movement.

24. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 23, characterized in that the control device is a toggle (70, 80) with a movement direction in a plane parallel to the side of the domestic electrical appliance, preferably being a rotary toggle.

25. Domestic electrical appliance according to claim 23, characterized in that the control device is a button with a movement direction into the side of the domestic electrical appliance and is preferably a push button.

26. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the light source (16, 66, 76, 86) at least partly projects into the control device and is preferably located therein.

27. Domestic electrical appliance according to one of the claims 1 to 25, characterized in that the light source (16, 66, 76, 86) is located in the domestic electrical appliance outside the control device and preferably with a light-conducting duct

from the light source to the transillumination area and in particular the light-conducting duct is a light guide.

28. Control device, particularly panel (10, 40, 50) for fixing to an electrical appliance, particularly to a washing machine, a clothes drying machine or a dishwasher, the control device at least partly comprising a covering material which at the standard material thickness (14) selected for the control device is substantially opaque and in an area provided for a display device for providing the user with visual information has at least one transillumination area (20, 35, 41, 46, 60), in which the covering material thickness is so reduced compared with the standard material thickness that the transillumination area can at least zonally be transilluminated by the light of a light source positioned facing the back of the control device.

29. Control device according to claim 28, characterized by the features of the characterizing part of at least one of the claims 2 to 27.